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SUBJECT: SECURITY COUNCIL CHAIRMAN: KAZAKHSTAN WILL SEND
SURVEY TEAM TO AFGHANISTAN TO STUDY PRT PARTICIPATION

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with increased trans-Caspian oil shipments, even more attention needed to be paid to the issue. Tazhin articulated Kazakhstan's significant economic promise as a transit country, suggesting that, in time, government revenues from transit trade could exceed those from the oil sector. Finally, Tazhin argued that, even if unseen, democracy was developing in Kazakhstan, driven by the "fragmentation" of the economic elite and the political articulation of their economic interests. End Summary.

A History of GOK Support in Afghanistan...

12. (SBU) Opening with the issue of possible Kazakhstani participation in an Afghanistan PRT, Tazhin summarized past GOK support for the anti-terrorist coalition in Afghanistan. Since 2001, he said, Kazakhstan had allowed 2700 coalition overflights and 40 emergency landings on Kazakhstani soil. Further, the Kazakhstani special services had intensified information sharing with their U.S. counterparts, and had received "high marks" for the quality and intensity of the cooperation. The GOK had no objections to this type of cooperation, Tazhin explained, because Afghanistan's problems directly affected Central Asia.

...and a "Survey Team" to Come

13. (SBU) In this context, Tazhin continued, the GOK was putting together an inter-agency Survey Team. Once assembled, likely "by September or October," the team would work fast to make a "strategic" decision about Kazakhstani participation in a PRT. The primary obstacle, Tazhin observed, was the "problem of security" in the provinces.

Caspian Security: Serious Work Needs to be Done

14. (SBU) Asked for his perspective on Caspian Sea security, Tazhin began by citing the recent GOK signing of an Inter-governmental Agreement governing entry of Kazakhstani oil into the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline. The fact that in the near future large volumes of Kazakhstani oil would be crossing the Caspian on tankers - combined with the littoral states' clear trend toward "militarizing" the sea - meant that Caspian security was an issue of increasing importance. We have serious work to do, Tazhin concluded, both in protecting Kazakhstan's coasts and in preventing a possible terrorist attack on oil infrastructure.

15. (SBU) Tazhin and Deputy Defense Minister Bolat Sembinov reviewed several USG/GOK projects aimed at enhancing Caspian security, with Tazhin suggesting that the U.S. sale of a big (1000 ton displacement) military vessel to Kazakhstan would be a valuable enhancement to Caspian security.

Reflecting on Neighbors...

16. (SBU) Reflecting on the neighboring countries, Tazhin underscored that Kazakhstan had much to gain from economic integration with its neighbors. While in early years Kazakhstan might have been in competition with other Central Asian states, he explained, the country's economic success had put it in a position to benefit from its neighbors' development. Furthermore, regional economic development would help mitigate three growing Kazakhstani concerns: illegal migration, nacre-trafficking (and a related increase in domestic drug addiction), and the threat that standing governments could be overtaken by theocracies. The USG might not see the latter risk in Uzbekistan as it pushed for greater democratization, Tazhin warned, "but we clearly see the dangers from here."

...and on Ourselves...

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17. (SBU) DAS Feigenbaum pushed back, noting that the U.S. experience suggested that the often-heard argument that states faced a choice between "democracy" and "stability" was, in fact, a false choice, as decisions made to promote short-term stability at the expense of democracy often eroded stability in the long-run. Tazhin responded by defending Kazakhstan's own path of democratic development, arguing that, with economic institutions built, it was (only) now time to create a "liberal political infrastructure."

18. (SBU) Kazakhstan wouldn't develop a "classical liberal

democracy" any time in the next decade, Tazhin predicted, but progress was being made, driven by the "fragmentation of the economic elite" into ten or fifteen groupings. By virtue of pursuing the political articulation of their economic interests, Tazhin explained, these groups were driving political change. "We are making progress," Tazhin vowed, adding that, because the change was occurring in the society itself, and "not as a result of the subjective will of one person or another," the outcome would be lasting.

Kazakhstan's Potential as a Transit Country

19. (SBU) Responding to DAS Feigenbaum vision of Kazakhstan expanding its traditional Northern and Western focus to become truly "omni-directional" in its regional trade and infrastructure ties, tapping the dynamic economies of China and India in the process, Tazhin articulated great potential for Kazakhstan as a transit country. China, he said, processes 2.5 billion tons of cargo a year through its ports and railroads. If Kazakhstan captured even 1% of that trade, he reasoned - capitalizing on the fact that Chinese-Europe trade via Kazakhstan was 12-14 days faster than by sea - it would represent 25 million tons a year. The potential for growth in transit trade was huge, he concluded, suggesting that in "seventeen years" GOK revenues from transit trade could equal revenues from the oil sector.

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